



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release

Pacific Islands External Affairs Office

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Recovery Plan for Hawaiian Forest Birds Released

A recovery plan that identifies individual species accounts and actions needed statewide to aid 21 species of forest birds in Hawai'i was released today by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The plan covers a group of species for which the threats and limiting factors are similar, and for which similar actions are needed for recovery.

"This plan represents a tremendous effort by a multitude of federal, state, and private partners," said Patrick Leonard, field supervisor for the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. "Such a large-scale plan can only be successfully implemented through cooperative conservation."

Most of the species covered in this plan are now found only in the upper elevation rain forests above 4,000 feet on the islands of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i. Two exceptions are the palila, which is limited to dry upland forests on Mauna Kea on Hawai'i, and the O'ahu 'elepaio, which occurs in native and nonnative forests on O'ahu at elevations as low as 330 feet. Subfossil records and observations by early naturalists in the Hawaiian Islands indicate that most of the species once had much larger distributions and occurred at lower elevations.

Previous recovery efforts for Hawaiian forest birds have been guided by earlier recovery plans for Hawai'i forest birds, the palila, Kaua'i forest birds, and Maui-Moloka'i forest birds. Separate plans still guide recovery actions for the 'io or Hawaiian hawk, and 'alalā or Hawaiian crow.

Many of the recovery recommendations in this plan – including forest protection, forest restoration, predator control, fencing and removal of feral ungulates (pigs, goats, sheep, and deer), and the control of avian disease – will benefit the 'io and 'alalā, which use many of the same habitat areas found on the island of Hawai'i as some of the forest birds described in this plan.

The primary threats to Hawaiian forest birds are habitat loss and degradation by agriculture, urbanization, cattle grazing, browsing by feral ungulate species, timber harvesting, and invasion of nonnative plant species into native-dominated plant communities; predation by alien mammals; and diseases carried by alien mosquitoes.

Several Hawaiian forest birds now occur in such low numbers and in restricted ranges that they are threatened by natural processes, such as inbreeding depression and skewed sex ratios, and by natural and man-made factors such as hurricanes, periodic vegetation die-back, and wildfires.

The plan contains criteria needed to downlist species from endangered to threatened status and for delisting or removing them from the list of federally protected species. The 21 species covered in this plan include:

- O`ahu `elepaio (*Chasiempis sandwichensis ibidis*)
- Kāma`o or large Kaua`i thrush (*Myadestes myadestinus*)
- Oloma`o or Moloka`i thrush (*Myadestes lanaiensis rutha*)
- Puaiohi or small Kaua`i thrush (*Myadestes palmeri*)
- Kaua`i `ō`ō (*Moho braccatus*)
- `Ō`ū (*Psittirostra psittacea*)
- Palila (*Loxioides bailleui*)
- Maui parrotbill (*Pseudonestor xanthophrys*)
- Kaua`i `akialoa (*Hemignathus procerus*)
- Kaua`i nukupu`u (*Hemignathus lucidus hanapepe*)
- Maui nukupu`u (*Hemignathus lucidus affinis*)
- `Akiapōlā`au (*Hemignathus munroi*)
- Hawai`i creeper (*Oreomystis mana*)
- O`ahu alauahio or O`ahu creeper (*Paroreomyza maculata*)
- Kākāwahie or Moloka`i creeper (*Paroreomyza flammea*)
- Hawai`i `ākepa (*Loxops coccineus coccineus*)
- Maui `ākepa (*Loxops coccineus ochraceus*)
- `Ākohekohe or crested honeycreeper (*Palmeria dolei*)
- Po`ouli (*Melamprosops phaeosoma*)
- `Akikiki or Kaua`i creeper (*Oreomystis bairdi*)
- Bishop`s `ō`ō (*Moho bishopi*)

A draft of the plan was released for public review and comment in October 2003. After the 60-day review period, comments from the public and scientific peer reviewers were considered and incorporated into the final plan.

Availability of the recovery plan was announced in the Federal Register on September 28, 2006. The recovery plan is currently available online through the Fish and Wildlife Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>. Additionally, electronic versions of the recovery plan are available on CD, and paper copies will be available in 4 to 6 weeks, and may be requested by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service's Honolulu office at 808 792 9400.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American Tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.